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ABSTRACT

To provide data for changes currently being implemented in Chicago public schools, a study examined the effect of teachers' attitudes on student discipline problems and classroom management strategies. Questionnaires were distributed to 50 elementary and secondary teachers soliciting their views regarding the characteristics of problem students, effective classroom management strategies, the most frequently occurring and major causes of discipline problems, and strategies to improve student discipline. Study findings included the following results: (1) 41 respondents indicated that teachers needed more skill and training in handling disruptive behavior; (2) 39 indicated that stress related to classroom management is the most influential factor in failure among novice teachers; (3) the four most frequently occurring discipline problems identified were disrespect for fellow students, disinterest in school, lack of attention, and excessive talking; (4) the three major causes of problems identified were violence in the media, broken families, and drugs and alcohol; and (5) the top four ways to improve discipline were counseling and guidance, administrative procedures, more consistent discipline, and better communication between the school and the community. (The survey instrument and 11 references are included.) (BCY)

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Teachers' Attitudes Toward Student Discipline Problems and Classroom Management Strategies

ED 364 330

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Over the past three and a half years, the Chicago public schools have been involved in implementing School Reform in the educational system. The new era has brought about many changes in the way the system operates. From a new superintendent, who at the time of this writing, has left the system to new ways of selecting principals in the schools. These changes bring about new and different ways of operating and managing the local schools. In particular are the ways in which new principals attempt to restructure the schools in order to make their visions a reality in providing an appropriate education for the students.

Therefore, due to the new ideas, methods, programs, etc., that are implemented in the schools, many changes occur. Sometimes, the change is slow and sometimes fast. Whatever way the change occurs, it brings about conflict, stress, hostilities and sometimes illnesses.

One new program which prompted this research study on student discipline problems stemmed from involvement in the newly implemented program in the Chicago public school system which is the Teachers for Chicago Program.

There appears to be an atmosphere of non-acceptance of the new intern teachers by many veteran teachers. As the school year has progressed, a number of discipline problems have occurred in one particular school from regular to special education students.

Since the change for the Chicago public school system is inevitable, educators can benefit from receiving current information on how and why teacher attitudes can effect students discipline problems and classroom management strategies.

The twenty-first century is upon us and the educational system appears to be losing its battle to educate the students. The problems stem from many factors. A comprehensive study by Sawicki (1983), indicated that we are still seemingly faced with the same old problems; children not learning, adults cannot read beyond a sixth grade reading level, children are becoming more and more

destructive, etc... He added that we must begin to ponder these concerns that are being reiterated over and over again, then one must begin to question these issues. The questioning is of two types: self and society. Have times really changed? Are students really worse than they were years ago? Or is it that our attitudes toward self has changed? He also indicated that the latter may be the reason that education is in its current state. Teachers, parents and administrators seem to be verbalizing the same type of feeling: FAILURE.

Parents tell us that schools are not doing enough for their child, or schools are expecting too much of the children. Teachers are saying children do not behave as well as they did a few years ago, or children are not interested in learning. Administrators claim teachers do not care, parents like to complain, and kids do not know what they want to do.

Sawicki (1983) indicated that the two factors which have contributed most to the development of negative attitudes are media and money. When we turn the TV or radio on we are watching/hearing a glorified performance. All types of props and music and entertainment are before us. Unfortunately, we tend to retain these images and project them into our daily lives. When something beautiful happens, we expect to hear the theme from "Dr. Zhivago." When something terrible happens, we expect the sky to darken, lightening to strike, and winds of undetermined velocity to roar about us. The point is that we tend to think in terms of our senses, that is, something must be sensationalized before we believe that it is good. The effects on the schools of the courses of negativism from the media and money have taken a tremendous toll on the education of the children.

Wagner's (1983) study on discipline contended that students need to learn to behave in a socially approved manner in order for a healthy learning environment to exist. Socialization requires the redirection of destructive behavior into socially useful behavior. Well disciplined classes assist the child in developing a sensitivity to the needs of others, resulting in social interests and the desire to cooperate with others. Order, in the "good" classroom comes from the fact that students are considering the rights of their neighbors, not as a result of fear of the teacher. He added that the aims of education and classroom discipline are the same: to help children and youth to become self-directing people. When a child first enters into a new classroom he encounters a new environment which requires a certain level of maturity. Frustration develops and the level of tolerance can be broken at any time. At this time someone is needed to reinforce and support the child, thus preventing a major crisis. That someone, in most cases, is the classroom teacher, whose attitude will set the climate for curriculum implementation, instructional effectiveness, and student satisfaction through learning in a non-threatening environment. The purposes of this paper are to look at

this process with the hope that teachers will realize that, that old enemy, "discipline," might be in fact "themselves."

A study by Levin, James, et. al. (1984) indicated that in fourteen of its fifteen years, the Gallup poll of public attitudes toward education has identified discipline as the largest problem facing the public schools. Although lack of discipline in the home was the most frequently cited cause (72%), it was not the only perceived cause of school discipline problems. This concern for discipline was not limited to outsiders; teachers also list discipline problems as a major concern. The National Education Association NEA 1977 reported that 66% of responding teachers viewed managing student behavior as the main problem faced in teaching. Many teachers felt that they were unable to cope with, much less resolve the discipline problems they faced each day. When teachers leave teaching, the most frequently cited reason for leaving the profession was discipline (Gallup, 1982).

Levin et. al. (1984) indicated that discipline problems which drove teachers from the profession and undermine public confidence in education, are not isolated in larger cities or less affluent areas. The Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency reported that escalating violence, vandalism, and discipline problems were found in "any city, suburb, or town, irregardless of geographic location or per capital income" (Bayh, 1978).

The study by Baker (1985) suggested that if we are to improve discipline in our schools, we must first agree that a problem exists. Considerable research evidence indicated that the discipline problems in U.S. public schools is severe enough that it should concern educators for a number of reasons. Educators must be concerned about the lack of discipline in the schools because an educational environment depends on good discipline. A study of inner-city schools in London used data collected over a number of years to show that, when children move from primary school (ages 5 to 11) to secondary school, their behavior and achievement are affected by school characteristics. Students who transferred from behaviorally "bad" elementary schools to "good" secondary schools became good students and vice versa. Baker (1985) stated that a good climate for learning is a climate with good discipline. Fundamental to improving the quality of the schools in the maintenance of a degree of civil behavior sufficient to allow educational improvements to have a chance to succeed.

Baker (1985) also found that teachers must become aware that teacher burnout is a major problem in U.S. schools. More than 90% of 1,282 teachers surveyed in one study had experienced feelings of burnout, and 85% of 7,000 teachers surveyed in another study felt that there were chronic health problems related to teaching. Nearly half (40%) of the teachers responding said that they took prescription drugs to treat job-related illness. In another study of 5,000 Chicago teachers, more than half reported having had some

job-related illness. He also reported that elementary school teachers in a National Education Association (NEA) poll reported just as much on-the-job stress as did high school teachers. The NEA poll suggested that student misbehavior interfered more with teaching in the elementary schools than in the high schools. Yet, more serious behavior, especially criminal acts, occurred in the secondary schools. He study suggested that teachers in the high schools allowed troublesome students to sit in the back of the room, read books, and ignore the lesson. In return, these students tactily agreed not to disrupt the class, at least not too often. Elementary school teachers did not do this. They were more likely to insist that all students pay attention to the lesson. Consequently, elementary teachers faced a more persistent battle with disruptive students. Therefore, teachers must seek out ways to cope with the stress they are confronted with at school which can affect the teacher's attitude about disciplining students. He concluded that although many schools have taken steps to improve their disciplinary climate, one continuing cause of the persistence of discipline problems remains: the failure of many educators and administrators to face the problem squarely, to recognize its importance, and take steps to improve conditions in the schools.

Nicholson's, et. al. (1985) study contended that challenge to provide positive, orderly, and crime-free schools required strong administrative support and the active involvement of the school and its surrounding community. He added that safe and effective schools are always characterized by positive school climates. Six factors are essential to the establishment and maintenance of positive climates: 1) leadership, 2) discipline, 3) security, 4) attendance, 5) conflict management, and 6) curriculum. Combined in creative ways, these factors provide the necessary framework for secure, peaceful, and productive schools. Therefore, teachers who are concerned about helping to create an educational environment which will assist in educating all types of students must focus on developing their attitudes so that the job of educating children will be the priority of our nation which is "working toward making life better for the children." They also suggested that, as a nation, we stand now at a crossroad in our struggle to alleviate the problems of crime, violence, and disruption in our schools. The situation calls for united action on the part of parents, students, educators, and the legal and professional communities that serve all our your people. Our ability to respond to these cries will directly affect the excellence and productivity of our nation's classrooms and will ultimately affect our nation's future.

A study on disruptive pupils in schools by Steed (1985) cited a report by the Academy of Finland (Kari, Remes and Vaahana, 1980) that suggested that ch of the blame for the misbenavior of pupils must be borne by the school, which, it argues, succeeds in its easiest task -- the education of those who adjust -- but fails with those who do not. He asked, are schools unwilling or unable to cope? Are we reaping the fruits of Spock, the Welfare State and

progressive education. The research suggested that a small majority of pupils in school are receiving disproportionate attention, energy and commitment of scarce resources. These are the aggressively disruptive pupils, many of whom are eventually excluded to off-site units. Where does the truth lie? Are schools and teachers on the point of breakdown? Are some children ineducable? Where does the fault lie -- in the child or the school.

Teachers' attitudes are sometimes influenced by the reputations of students in the school setting. The study by Steed (1985) further indicated that teachers know from past experience who their troublemakers are; when they decide that enough is enough, they seem to be as much influenced by this previous knowledge as by the nature and severity of the pupil act to which they are reacting. Talking or coming late into a lesson may be tolerated for one but not for another pupil, at one time of the week but not another, in one class but not another. The rules change according to the time of the day or week or term, the nature of the work, the health and sensitivity of the teacher and pupil, the experience and maturity of the teacher and his/her difficulties in getting to school that morning. There is no obvious and readily available logic to explain the teacher's behavior: hence, the commonest pupil response is "it's not fair."

Steed (1985) contended that teachers worry about disruption because it stops them from doing their jobs. Pupils worry because it stops them from learning or because they find themselves in threatening and uncontrolled situations. Pupils who fail are teacher failures. It suggests failure both as professionals, to teach subjects or skills, and as adults, to control children. Teachers feel that there is something shameful in admitting to problems of control. There is a feeling of letting the side down and, consequently, a conspiracy of silence. An alternative to silence is to develop a common and shared understanding that difficulties are caused by certain classes of children. Common sense explanations rationalize situations by equating misbehavior with immature minds struggling against the civilizing influence of the school.

According to Steed (1985), schools should consider the structure which could best contain an optimum or healthy level of disruption, both for the sake of teachers and pupils. Pupils bring into schools attitudes and values which are negative and destructive; many are disadvantaged and suffer in all sorts of unspecified ways because of poverty and broken homes; but schools also vary in their ability to overcome such handicaps; some even appear by a perverse logic to foster tendencies which they are pledged to overcome. There are bad teachers and bad schools, as well as bad pupils. Others allow children to overcome handicap and to meet new challenges. Clearly, schools and teachers can and do

have an independent effect, irrespective of pupils' background and social class.

Gottfredson's (1986) study on strategies for improving student behavior suggested that schools with discipline problems are:

1. Schools where the rules are not clear, fair, and firmly enforced.
2. Schools that use ambiguous responses to student behavior by lowering grades in response to misconduct.
3. Schools where teachers and administrators do not know what the rules are or agree on responses to student misconduct.
4. Schools that ignore misconduct.
5. Schools where students do not believe in the rules.
6. Large schools.
7. Schools that lack resources needed for teaching.
8. Schools with poor teacher-administration cooperation or with inactive administrations.
9. Schools where teachers tend to have punitive attitudes.

The research also showed that the problem of school disorder is greatest in urban settings. Schools located in urban communities characterized by poverty and disorganization are far more likely to experience high levels of disorder than are schools in other communities.

Gottfredson's (1986) study demonstrated that there is much schools can do to reduce disorder. Disruptive students are those students who:

1. Do not attend school regularly.
2. Do not perform well in school.
3. Have low educational expectations.
4. Have delinquent friends.
5. Dislike school.
6. Lack belief in the validity of rules.
7. Have little adult supervision.

These risk factors for schools and individuals converge in suggesting the need for clear, fair, and consistent enforcement that is implemented in a way that promotes liking for school and belief in the validity of the rules among low achievers, and what motivate these youths to attend school on a regular basis. The research suggests the need for strategies that encourage attachments to prosocial others, both teachers and peers. The research suggests the need to strengthen schools as organizations to increase communication, consensus and cohesion.

Effective classroom management strategies are necessary to deter many of the discipline problems faced by the teachers. A study by McDaniel (1987) indicated that almost all teachers know

something about behavior modification. Somewhere in their training they have learned the importance of positive reinforcement. That "praise is better than punishment" in managing behavior has become almost trite. He believed that one reason that day-to-day practices of teachers do not demonstrate familiarity with behavioral psychology is that the practices often run counter to their growing-up experiences. Like their parents, teachers tend to assume good behavior, to accept it as commonplace, and to ignore it on the grounds that this communicates the normal expectation for good behavior. "Let sleeping dogs lie" is a common principle of child rearing. A second reasons for the infrequent use of behavioral principles in classrooms is that teachers learn to intervene quickly to squelch misbehavior. Since students will test the teacher's alertness, the vigilant teacher often learns from students to apply "desist statements," which often start with negatives terms: "Stop," "Don't," "No." A third reason that teachers do not frequently use positive reinforcement is that their teacher education courses seldom teach them how to apply such principles to improve discipline and classroom management. Ten practical and specific techniques that are derived from behavioral psychology are listed in McDaniel's study (1987):

1. Teach Specific Directions: to maximize good behavior, teachers should teach students exactly what is required.
2. Look for Good Behavior: this is the "catch 'em being good" principle.
3. Praise Effectively: verbal praise can be a powerful tool if teachers understand the requirements of effective praise. One of these requirements is that the teacher gives descriptive details. "You are doing a good job on your drawing."
4. Model Good Behavior: the teacher should demonstrate how things ought to be done.
5. Use Nonverbal Reinforcement: facial expressions are especially meaningful for nonverbal reinforcement. Most teachers eventually learn to use smiles, nods and touch to show approval. Truly effective behavior modifiers use a great deal of nonverbal reinforcement. (Look at students and smile as if to say, "I see you are paying attention".)
6. Establish Token Economies: students can quickly learn that each marble in the jar is a token that may represent, for example, free time. Each token might be worth fifteen seconds of free time to be cashed in at the end of the day.
7. Premark: the teacher lets the students determine the reinforcers for appropriate behavior. The teachers must give the students the opportunity to identify what they want for rewards and to exercise choice in setting up a token economy.
8. Teach Kids to Reinforce One Another: effective teachers teach students to praise one another. If you are an effective reinforcer, you are also a good model of how

people might interact with one another in a positive way.

9. Teach Kids to Reinforce Themselves: students can benefit from observing their own behavior and complementing themselves on their performance. This practice forces them to look for their strengths and can improve self-concept.
10. Vary Positive Reinforcement: there are many practices that you can use to keep your reinforcement practices changing and improving. New techniques, new reinforcers, and new ideas can help keep your classroom sparkling.

He suggested that positive reinforcement in practice can build a positive self-concept, develop an attitude of success, and enhance instructional motivation for students. Practicing positive reinforcement principles takes work, but it is work that pays dividends for the teacher who wants to make the classroom a better place in which to live.

The 1987 NEA/Gallup Public and K-12 Teacher Member Opinion Polls sought to learn more about sentiment on reasons for the discipline problem, responsibility for the problem, and the extent of public schools' potential role in dealing with the discipline problem. The polls indicated that teacher members most frequently report the following as the four major reasons for disciplinary problems in the schools: the breakup of traditional family values (87%); parents' failure to discipline their children at home (87%); increased use of drugs and alcohol by young people (68%); and teachers having to deal with too many students (67%). The options that K-12 teacher members mention the least often as major reasons for discipline problems are: teachers are ill-trained to deal with such problems (23%); lack of training in moral and ethical values by the schools (20%); inadequate emphasis by the schools on student learning and achievement (19%); and teachers aren't properly motivating students to learn (14%).

Results of the polls (1988) revealed that teachers overwhelmingly believe that parents and society are responsible for the discipline problems in the schools. Eighty-one percent may be categorized as placing responsibility on parents and society, but only 7% believe the schools have major responsibility, and 12 percent believe the schools share equal responsibility with parents and society. (Female teacher members are more likely to hold families and society responsible than are male teacher members.)

A survey of classroom teachers conducted for the U.S. Department of Education between October, 1986 and January, 1987 found that of 13 possible actions to improve discipline problems, three were judged "very productive" by a majority of respondents: increased student self-discipline developed at home (74%), smaller classes (63%), and increased parental support for discipline (62%). Measures including stricter enforcement of rules against misconduct generally, increased follow-up by principals on disciplinary

referrals, immunity from lawsuits when discipline is enforced well within guidelines, increased use of positive reinforcement for good behavior, and principals making discipline a higher priority were rated as "very productive" by about 45% of respondents.

McCann's (1989) study on discipline suggested that the Delaware public school teachers still perceive school discipline to be a problem. By providing comparisons between the perspectives of teachers in Delaware and those nationwide, this report also serves to point out that school discipline problems are national phenomena. It is unlikely that solutions will be easy or quick but recognition that a problem exists both locally and nationally is one step in the right direction.

A study on discipline by Anderson (1992) indicated that teachers in Chapter I schools reported that student misbehavior is a problem. Less than one-half of them believed that they have a high degree of influence over determining discipline policy. The teachers in Chapter I schools have lower perceptions of parental support, and report serious or moderate discipline problems more often than teachers in non-Chapter I schools. In elementary and junior high schools, teachers in high poverty schools more often report that student misbehavior, student tardiness, and class cutting interfere with their teaching. At all three school levels, significantly more teachers in the high poverty schools report serious or moderate problems with the specific discipline issues asked about in the survey than did their counterparts in low poverty schools. Given the student discipline problems that teachers in high poverty schools report facing, as well as their perceptions that there is a lack of potential support for their efforts, one might expect to find them more discouraged and dissatisfied than other teachers. Most report that they would become teachers if they had it to do over again, and less than 5% plan to leave teaching as soon as they can.

Due to an increase in emotional problems which are surfacing in our society, effective classroom management strategies must be implemented in the schools. Mishra's (1992) study contended that disruptive behavior in the classroom is a concern for teachers and students alike. Effectiveness of learning can be enhanced if this type of behavior is identified and strategies are devised to counteract it. Many of the behaviors exhibited by students can be due to lack of socialization, lack of attention, and lack of maturity. He indicated that the following strategies can be used to deal with disruptive behaviors:

1. Define the ground rules for the class at the outset.
2. Establish a clear set of firm guidelines of behavior for the class at the outset (deal with students who habitually come late or make noisy entrances to the class, pass notes in the class, etc.).

3. The student and the teacher should discuss the disruptive behavior one-on-one. It is unwise to get into a public display of frustration. Talk to the student after class in private. Clarify to the student that it is the behavior which is disruptive. According to Mishra (1992) teachers must become aware that in order to get respect from the students, students should feel that they are in control of what they learn and that they have a stake in the learning process.

In conclusion, discipline problems are a serious matter for all teachers and administrators. Discipline and finding the appropriate classroom management strategies to use are hardy and tenacious concerns in our nation as we approach the twenty-first century. Teachers' attitudes play an important role in helping to alleviate the plaguing discipline problems in the schools today. We need help as we seek to understand our students and ourselves. Teachers attitudes toward discipline and classroom management strategies, along with everyone interested in providing an appropriate education for the children, must be addressed. this includes the administrators of the schools, the communities across the nation and, especially, our political leaders. We must begin to build more collaborative teams starting at the head of our government down to the schools in order to help alleviate the discipline problems that are in our educational system.

This review of literature presented a comprehensive study on teachers' attitudes toward discipline and classroom management strategies to assist in providing an effective, safe environment for the students to learn. It is hoped that the novice and veteran teachers will use this information to begin to work together as a team so that the students can learn and become productive citizens of our nation.

Finally, teachers must begin to take leadership roles in organizing support groups in our schools and communities in order to address the issues that are facing our educational system during school reform. The number one priority must be the discipline problems facing us in the classrooms. Until this dreadful issue is solved, the students will not receive the education that they are entitled to. We, as teachers, must change our attitudes about the children that we teach. There is not much that we can do about the environment that the students live in. They bring an exuberant amount of hostilities and emotional feelings to us from those environments. In order to alleviate some of the stress we experience associated with the discipline problems and bureaucratic educational organization, we must resort to finding all the methods possible to assist with implementing effective classroom management strategies. Above all, we must work as a team in a positive, effective manner in order to help "make life better for the children."

Questions of the Study

1. What are teachers' perception of the characteristics of students viewed as discipline problems?
2. What are teachers' attitudes toward classroom management strategies?
3. What are teachers' attitude toward the most frequently occurring discipline problems?
4. What are teachers' attitudes toward the major causes of discipline problems?
5. What are teachers' attitudes toward strategies to improve student discipline?

Procedures

Population/Sample:

The population/sample in this study will include 50 Chicago school teachers.

Method of Data Collection:

Data collection took place over a three week period during the months of March and April. The questionnaires were distributed and collected as contact was made with teachers while attending a university course, professional interviewing workshops and in the school where the researcher is employed. Professional colleagues also distributed questionnaires in their schools and those were distributed and collected via personal contact.

Instrument:

Levin, James et. al. (1984) questionnaire on teachers' attitudes toward discipline problems and classroom management strategies was adapted and titled "Questionnaire on Teachers' Attitudes Toward Discipline Problems and Classroom Management Strategies." The survey is referred to as the SDCMS (Student Discipline Classroom Management Strategy) survey in this paper. The adapted questionnaire addressed five areas in two sections:

1. Characteristics of Students Viewed as Discipline Problems.
2. Classroom Management Strategies.
3. Most Frequently Occurring Discipline Problems.
4. Major Causes of Disciplinary Problems.
5. Ways to Improve Discipline in the Schools.

The first section of the questionnaire focused on characteristics of students viewed as discipline problems, classroom management strategies, and corrective measures employed in the schools (23 statements). These statements required replies of "agree," "disagree," or "undecided." The second section asked for rank ordering in importance of the most frequently occurring discipline problems (8 items), the major causes of disciplinary problems (6 items), and ways to improve discipline in the schools (6 items).

The instrument was pilot tested on 10 teachers who will not be included in the study.

Treatment of Data:

The results will be tabulated in terms of percentage. The chi square will be used at the.05 level of confidence to determine the statistical significance of responses.

Findings of the Study

The data in the first section of the questionnaire on classroom management techniques, characteristics of students viewed as discipline problems and corrective measures employed in schools indicated that a large percentage of the teachers agreed with each other on four of the questions asked regarding:

1. Good teachers must be competent in curbing disruptive behavior in the classroom (49 out of 50 agreed).

14. Stress related to classroom management is the most influential factor in failure among novice teachers (39 out of 50 agreed).

3. Teachers need more skill and training in how to deal with disruptive classroom behavior (41 out of 50 agreed).

2. Stress related to classroom management is the most influential factor in failure among novice teachers (39 out of 50 agreed).

The second section of the questionnaire asked the respondents to indicate yes, no or undecided answers on their attitudes toward the most frequently occurring discipline problems, the major causes of disciplinary problems and the ways to improve discipline in the schools. The results indicated that the greatest significant differences were found in the yes column for each category presented in the second section of the questionnaire.

The teachers indicated the top four most frequently occurring discipline problems are: disrespect for fellow students, disinterest in school, lack of attention, and excessive talking.

Secondly, the three major causes of disciplinary problems indicated by the teachers were: violence in the media, broken families, and drugs/alcohol.

Finally, the teachers indicated that the top four ways to improve discipline in the schools are: counseling/guidance, administrative procedures, stricter/consistent discipline, and school/community communication improvement.

In summary, a substantial percentage of the teachers polled indicated that ten of twenty-three questions showed a .05 significant difference in the agree column. Seven of eight areas

listed under the most frequently occurring discipline problems showed a .05 significant difference in the yes column. Five areas of six under the major causes of disciplinary problems showed a .05 significant different in the yes column. Finally, all six of the areas under the ways to improve discipline in the schools showed a .05 significant difference in the yes column. These research findings appear to suggest that most teachers' attitudes agree strongly that specific criterion associated with effective classroom management strategies must be developed and utilized in order to solve many of the discipline problems that are plaguing the schools. These problems appear to interfere greatly with providing the students with an appropriate education.

This research provides some evidence that teachers' attitudes toward discipline problems and classroom management strategies can effect the educational organization. Therefore, it appears vital that these issues be addressed in order to find ways to provide an orderly, effective learning environment for the children.

RESPONSES TO STUDENT DISCIPLINE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT SURVEY (SDCMS)

SECTION I

N=50	Agree	Disagree	Undeci.
1. Good teachers must be competent in curbing disruptive behavior in the classroom.	49*	0	0
2. Stress related to classroos management is the most influential factor in failure among novice teachers.	39*	5	6
3. Teachers need more skill and training in how to deal with disruptive classroom behavior.	41*	4	3
4. The public's view that discipline is the most important problem facing the schools today, is warranted.	36*	9	6
5. Disciplinary problems are more frequent in city schools than in suburban or rural schools.	20	20	12
6. Many disciplinary problems lie totally beyond the school's control.	28	19	5
7. Many of the disciplinary problems in a school have racial or ethnic overtones.	13	27*	11
8. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students all have different concepts of what constitutes a disciplinary problem and the appropriate corrective measures to be taken.	37*	9	3
9. More active, efficient, and determined administrative procedures would improve discipline.	4	7	4
10. The back to basics movement implies tougher and stricter discipline.	20	19	11
11. Compulsory education should be modified so that youths that are chronic disciplinary problems could leave school at an earlier age.	10	31*	8
12. Corporal punishment is a legitimate means of producing desirable student behavior.	9	37*	4
13. Student assaults on teachers should be handled by the courts.	38*	6	5
14. Parents should be legally ·sponsible for their child's ·ndalism of school property.	44*	3	3
15. Schools must become more responsible for the moral training of children.	20	20	10
16. Extension of students' rights has limited the school's control of discipline.	31*	11	9
17. Students should have input into the making of classroom behavior rules.	39*	10	3
18. Most students classified as chronic disciplinary problems are also poor students academically.	27	19	4
19. Most students classified as chronic disciplinary problems are also inactive in after school activities.	20	18	12

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20. I would rather enroll in graduate level or inservice courses pertaining to classroom management techniques.

Yes 21 No 15 Undecided 9

21. Did you receive any training in classroom management?

Yes 25 No 16

22. General classroom behavior has worsened since you first began teaching:

Agree 36* Disagree 8 Not applicable, taught less than 3 years 0

23. If agreed with question 22 then the worsening discipline problems are evidenced by:

greater nos. of student involved	more severe instances	both more students & more severe instances
3	3	20

* Significant at the .05 level of confidence

SECTION II

Most Frequently Occurring Problems

Problem	Yes	No	Undecided
Disrespect for Fellow Students	40*	1	1
Disinterest in School	39*	3	2
Excessive Talking	36*	5	1
Lack of Attention	37*	2	4
Disrespect for Teacher	32*	4	3
Lateness/Poor Attendance	28*	13	3
Vandalism	19	17	3
Fighting	33*	5	3

Major Causes of Disciplinary Problems

Cause	Yes	No	Undecided
Permissive Society	33*	4	4
Broken Families	36*	5	1
Faults Within Schools	26*	12	6
Decrease in Traditional Classrooms	10	18	12
Drugs/Alcohol	35*	5	2
Violence in the Media	37*	3	1

Ways to Improve Discipline in the Schools

Method	Yes	No	Undecided
Administrative Procedures	37*	1	2
Stricter/Consistent Discipline	35*	4	1
Curriculum Reform	24*	9	8
School/Community Communication Improvement	34*	3	4
Better Teacher Preparation in Classroom Management	35*	4	2
Counseling/Guidance	40*	2	1

* Significant at the .05 level of confidence

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Abstract

Due to the many changes occurring in Chicago because of school reform, a number of new programs are being implemented in the school system. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine if teachers' attitudes toward discipline problems and classroom management strategies can effect the learning environment. The Levin, James, et. al. (1985) questionnaire was revised and used to poll 50 Chicago teachers' attitudes on the issues presented in this paper. The questionnaire contained two sections. The Chi Square procedure was done on the responses to determine the statistical significant differences. Section one contained 23 questions on classroom management techniques, characteristics of students viewed as discipline problems, and corrective measures employed in the schools (ten of the twenty-three questions showed a .05 significant difference in the agree column and four in the disagree column). Section two addressed three specific issues: most frequently occurring discipline problems (seven of the eight areas showed a .05 significant difference in the yes column); the major causes of disciplinary problems (five of six areas showed a .05 significant difference in the yes column); and the ways to improve discipline in schools (six of six areas in the yes column showed a .05 significant difference). This research appears to suggest that most teachers' attitudes agree strongly that specific criterion associated with specific classroom management strategies, must be developed and utilized in order to solve many of the discipline problems that are plaguing the schools.